Minolta

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Minolta (□□□□, *minoruta*) was a Japanese company that, under one name or another, manufactured cameras from 1929 to 2003. It produced cameras for virtually all film formats, even its own 16mm miniature film format. In the 1950s Chiyoda, as it was then called, ventured beyond production of cameras and binoculars into business services, especially photocopiers. Most branches of the company were related to optics: the copier branch, the exposure meter branch, etc. Minolta was succeeded by **Konica Minolta** after the merger with Konica in 2003.

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Minolta History

Minolta, although once counted among the "big five", has often been thought of as a second-ranking camera manufacturer in the photography world, a step below Nikon and Canon. But it has sometimes been in the first rank.

The Minolta SRT 101 was the world's best selling camera of its type in its time, as were the Minolta X-700 and the Minolta 7000. For five years beginning in 1985 Minolta was the biggest seller of SLR cameras in the world. The reason for this dominance was the release of its Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum system; the world's first "in-body" autofocus SLR. Before this time manufacturers had dabbled with lenses that focused themselves but that fitted their existing, manual-focus SLR cameras. Minolta was the first manufacturer to put the mechanism and electronics for the autofocus system into its SLR camera bodies and so the modern SLR was born. (Konica had been the first to put autofocus into a 35mm camera, but it was a fixed lens "compact" camera; and Polaroid had been the first to put autofocus into an SLR camera, but it neither was 35mm nor was an interchangeable lens design.)

1929–1970

This huge success was not foreseeable in 1928, when Kazuo Tashima founded Nichidoku Shashinki Shōten (□□□□□□□, Nippo-German Camera Shop). Indeed Tashima got support from the German camera technicians Billy Neumann and Willy Heilemann, and the first cameras needed parts and lenses from German manufacturers. In 1929 the company had managed to produce the first models of its Nifcalette camera series.

In 1931 the company was transformed into a stock corporation named **Molta** (□□□□□□□, *Moruta Gōshi Kaisha*), an abbreviation of *Mechanismus Optik und Linsen von Tashima* ("Mechanism, Optics and Lenses from Tashima"). The name **Minolta** was first used in 1933, for the Minolta I (or plain "Minolta"), a copy of the Plaubel Makina I. This was ostensibly from "Machinery and Instruments Optical by Tashima" but is more likely a backronym, inspired by (i) *minoru ta* (□□□), "ripening rice-fields" (a strong image of health and fruitfulness in Japan, and in Japanese pronounced identically to "Minolta"), and (ii) "Molta" itself. The company name and brand name would differ until 1962. In 1934 the Minolta Vest was the first Minolta which differed from average camera designs. In 1936 Minolta's first reflex camera appeared, the Minolta Flex for 60×60mm film.

The company name was again changed in 1937, to **Chiyoda Kōgaku** (□□□□□□□□□□□□, *Chiyoda Kōgaku Seikō kabushiki kaisha,* Chiyoda Optics and Precision Industry Co Ltd), sometimes abbreviated **Chiyoko**. in the same year, Chiyoda began manufacturing its own lenses. During the world war it also produced cameras for aerial reconnaissance photography. The company's first big innovation after the war was a small item, the first camera for its own 16mm miniature film format, the Konan-16.

In 1957 Chiyoda began to produce planetarium projection apparatus, optical machines which project all the visible stars of the night sky onto the ceilings of planetarium halls. In 1958 it took the first step towards its success with SLR cameras in the mid-80s by introducing its first 35mm SLR camera SR-2, the first one to combine several features of the modern SLR like pentaprism viewfinder, smooth mirror mechanics, easily exchangeable lenses, easy film transport etc. In 1959 Chiyoda started to produce photocomposing machines, copiers, and special projectors. Some of these activities (like copiers) are kept up nowadays by its successor Konica Minolta, although this has given up the photo business. In 1962 the company name became Minolta Camera Company (□□□□□□□□□□□□ *Minoruta Kamera kabushiki kaisha*), unified with the brand name.

Cooperation with Leitz

Before the era of the Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum SLRs, Minolta had a new phase of cooperation with German experts, and signed a cooperation agreement with Leitz in 1972. The first products resulting from this appeared in 1974: the Minolta XE SLR and the Leica CL rangefinder camera (sold in Japan as the Leitz Minolta CL). The XE was the basis for the 1977 Leica R3. The final result of the association with Leitz was the Minolta XD-11 (the same as XD-7, and the basis of the Leica R4). It was the first 35mm SLR camera combining both aperture priority and shutter priority automatic exposure modes. Many Rokkor lenses of the new MD series, usable in both automatic modes, were produced for this exciting camera.

In 1981, Minolta launched the CLE, a rangefinder camera with M-mount, the first one to have (aperture-priority) automatic exposure. The metering system was of the "TTL OTF" type (through the lens, reflected off the film), first introduced by Olympus in 1975 on the OM-2 SLR camera. The CLE was also the first Minolta camera to have TTL flash automation, together with the X-700 SLR introduced the same year.

Automation

The Minolta 7000 camera remains an icon of the 80s; however, Minolta did not hang on to its technological lead for long and Canon and Nikon fought to regain their positions as market leaders. By the 90s Minolta was back to its former underdog status. Minolta offered a large line of products from the most basic to the most "serious" of cameras. Among camera aficionados Minolta was known for its very high price/performance ratio.

Minolta continued to innovate. After popularizing the plastic-bodied, push-button-controlled SLR with the AF 7000, it moved towards a more traditional user interface in the mid-90s with the 600si Classic. The "Classic" name indicates a move back to knobs and dials and away from buttons and menus - as had always been on the Minolta 9000, by the way, even in 1985, the height of computerized push-button camera introductions. Photographers applauded this return to a logical control layout that allowed them to directly see settings on clearly visible knobs, and didn't require the memorizing of pages from the manual. This interface was carried forward into its popular pro-level Minolta Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum 9 and later 7. Similar control layouts were adopted by other manufacturers, but none matched the completeness of Minolta's direct-read-out knob-control offering.

With the DiMage X, Minolta solved the problem of the protruding optical zoom lens on *pocket* digicams. Its folded lens design allows an optical zoom lens to be totally contained within the body of the camera. This makes the cameras that use this design truly pocketable, faster to turn on and better protected from knocks

and damage.

Minolta has been criticized for its slowness to bring out a modern digital SLR camera compatible with the A-mount lenses. In late November 2004, the new Konica Minolta company finally released the much anticipated Konica Minolta Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum 7D Digital SLR and the innovation continued. What sets the 7D DSLR apart from the competition is the built-in image stabilization which works with any electronic autofocus lens attached to the camera body.

Konica joins Minolta

In October 2003 Minolta merged (http://kmpi.konicaminolta.us/eprise/main/kmpi/content/cam/cam_News/cam_NewsDetail/Konica_Minolta_Merger/) with Konica to form Konica Minolta. All new cameras after that time were badged as Konica Minolta, although, with reference to camera designs, Minolta remained the dominant partner.

Too Little, Too Late ...

As of spring 2006, Konica Minolta has withdrawn from the camera business (http://konicaminolta.com/releases/2006/0119_03_01.html) entirely. The digital camera manufacturing assets have been acquired by Sony, but film camera production is ceasing, and the film and mini-lab divisions are set to close within a year.

Konica Minolta now is solely a business servicer with no photo division.

Minolta Digital Cameras

Minolta DSLR Cameras (with interchangeable lenses)

- RD-175 using standard Minolta A-mount autofocus lenses
- RD-3000 using the Minolta V-mount lenses of the Vectis APS SLR

newer cameras, see Konica Minolta (Dynax/Maxxum 5D and Dynax/Maxxum 7D)

Minolta Digital Cameras with Fixed Lenses (non-interchangeable, but all with auto focus zoom lenses)

Minolta and Konica Minolta use the Dimage nameplate on all the fixed lens digital cameras.

- Minolta DiMage V
- Minolta DiMage 5
- Minolta Dimage 7
- Minolta Dimage 7Hi
- Minolta Dimage 7i
- Minolta Dimage F300
- Minolta Dimage Xt

- Minolta Dimage E323

newer cameras, see Konica Minolta

Minolta 35mm film Cameras

Minolta Autofocus 35mm SLR (Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum AF)

The Minolta Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum (Alpha in Japan and China, Maxxum in the Americas, Dynax in Europe, Africa and Asia) is a line of 35mm film SLR cameras built from 1985 to 2000 - some "new old stock" may still be available. The lenses and flash accessories for these are not compatible with the previous Minolta SR, SR T, and X-series of manual focus 35mm film SLR cameras, lenses and flashes.

Many of these models are alternatively labeled Alpha, Dynax or Maxxum and only a few model numbers are location-specific where an equivalent model number in another area of distribution uses another model number:

Minolta	Minolta Dynax	Minolta Maxxum	Minolta Alpha	release date
5000 AF	5000		5000	1986
7000 AF	7000		7000	1985
9000 AF	9000		9000	1985
	3000i	3000i	3700i	1989
	5000i	5000i	5700i	1989
	7000i	7000i	7700i	1988
	8000i	8000i	8700i	1990
	2xi	2xi		90ies
	3xi	3xi	3xi	1991
	5xi	5xi	5xi	1992
	7xi	7xi	7xi	1991
	9xi	9xi	9xi	1992
	300si	300si/350si/RZ 300si/RZ 330si	101si	90ies
	303si	QTsi	360si	90ies
	404si	STsi	Sweet S	90ies
	500si	400si/450si/RZ 400si/RZ 430si	303si	90ies
	500si Super	500si/RZ 530si	303si Super	90ies
	505si	HTsi		90ies
	505si Super	XTsi	Sweet	90ies
	600si	600si	507si	90ies

650si			90ies
700si	700si	707si	1993
800si	800si	807si	90ies
SPxi	SPsi		90ies
STsi			90ies
3L	3		200.
3/4	4		200.
30/40	50		200.
5	5		200.
60	70		200.
7	7		200.
9	9	9	90ies
9Ti			90ies

If anyone knows of additional models and or knows which of these are equivalent across the Alpha/Dynax/Maxxum divide, please pitch in! Note that early models were also named "AF".

Minolta Manual Focus 35mm SLR (SR, SR T and X-series)

- Minolta SR-2
- Minolta SR-1
- Minolta SR-1s
- Minolta SR-3
- Minolta SR-7
- Minolta SR-M
- Minolta ER
- Minolta SRT 101
- Minolta SRT 100
- Minolta SRT Super (Japan), SRT 102 (USA), SRT 303 (Europe)
- Minolta SRT MC
- Minolta SRT SC
- Minolta SRT 200 (USA), SRT 100b (Europe)
- Minolta SR 101 (Japan), SRT 201 (USA), SRT 101b (Europe)
- Minolta SR 505 (Japan), SRT 202 (USA), SRT 303b (Europe)
- Minolta SRT 100X
- Minolta SRT MCII
- Minolta SRT SCII
- Minolta X-1 (Japan), XK (USA), XM (Europe)
- Minolta X-1 Motor (Japan), XK Motor (USA), XM Motor (Europe)
- Minolta XE (Japan), XE-7 (USA), XE-1 (Europe)

- Minolta XEb (Japan only)
- Minolta XE-5 (USA and Europe)
- Minolta XD (Japan), XD-11 (USA), XD-7 (Europe)
- Minolta XD-s (Japan only)
- Minolta XD-s Medical (Japan only)
- Minolta XD-5
- Minolta XG-E (Japan), XG-7 (USA), XG-2 (Europe)
- Minolta XG-1
- Minolta XG-S (Japan), XG-SE (USA), XG-9 (Europe)
- Minolta X-70 (Japan), XG-M (USA, Europe)
- Minolta XG-A (simplified XG-1)
- Minolta X-700
- Minolta X-500 (Japan, Europe), X-570 (USA)
- Minolta X-300 (Japan, Europe), X-370 (USA)
- Minolta X-600 (Japan only)
- Minolta X-370n (USA), Minolta X-370s (Europe)
- Minolta X-9
- Minolta X-300s

Minolta Rangefinder 35mm Film Cameras with interchangeable lens

- Minolta 35
- Minolta 35 II
- Minolta 35 IIB
- Minolta Super A
- Leitz Minolta CL
- Minolta CLE

Minolta Rangefinder 35mm Film Cameras with fixed-mount lens

- Minolta A
- Minolta A2
- Minolta A2 LT
- Minolta A3
- Minolta A5
- Minolta AL
- Minolta AL2
- Minolta ALS
- Minolta ALE
- Minolta AL-F
- Minolta 24 Rapid (16 24x24mm exposures on 35mm film)
- Minolta Electro Shot
- Minolta Hi-Matic 11

- Minolta Hi-Matic 7
- Minolta Hi-Matic 7s
- Minolta Hi-Matic 7sII / Revue 400 SE
- Minolta Hi-Matic 9
- Minolta Hi-Matic CS
- Minolta Hi-Matic E
- Minolta Hi-Matic ES
- Minolta Hi-Matic F
- Minolta Hi-Matic FP
- Minolta HiMatic / Ansco Autoset
- Minolta Minoltina AL-S
- Minolta Minoltina-S
- Minolta Uniomat / Ansco Anscoset
- Minolta Uniomat II
- Minolta Uniomat III / Ansco Anscoset III
- Minolta V2
- Minolta V3

Minolta Viewfinder 35mm Film Cameras

- Minolta Autowide
- Minolta f12
- Minolta F35 Big Finder
- Minolta Freedom I
- Minolta FS-E II
- Minolta Hi-Matic 5
- Minolta Hi-Matic C
- Minolta Hi-Matic CSII
- Minolta Hi-Matic G
- Minolta Hi-Matic G2
- Minolta Hi-Matic GF
- Minolta Hi-Matic S
- Minolta Hi-Matic S2
- Minolta Hi-Matic SD
- Minolta Hi-Matic SD2
- Minolta Memo
- Minolta Minoltina-P
- Minolta Repo (half-frame)
- Minolta Repo-S (half-frame)

Minolta Compact 35mm Film Cameras

- HI-MATIC AF

- HI-MATIC AF-2
- AF-DL / FREEDOM DL
- WEATHERMATIC 35 DL
- ZOOM 60
- RIVA ZOOM 75 w / FREEDOM ZOOM 75w
- RIVA ZOOM 90 EX / FREEDOM ZOOM 90 EX
- RIVA ZOOM 105i / FREEDOM ZOOM 105i
- RIVA ZOOM 110 / FREEDOM ZOOM 110
- RIVA ZOOM 115 EX / FREEDOM ZOOM 115 EX
- RIVA ZOOM 130 / FREEDOM ZOOM 130
- RIVA ZOOM 140 EX / FREEDOM ZOOM 140 EX
- RIVA ZOOM 150 / FREEDOM ZOOM 150

and a lot more like that

newer Minolta zoom cameras, see Konica Minolta

Minolta APS Film Cameras

Minolta APS Film SLR Cameras

- Vectis S-100
- Vectis S-1

Minolta APS Film Compact Cameras

- Vectis 20
- Vectis 25
- Vectis 30
- Vectis 40
- Vectis GX-3
- Vectis 260
- Vectis 300
- Vectis 300L
- Vectis Weathermatic Zoom underwater camera
- Vectis 2000
- Vectis 3000

Minolta 120 Film Cameras

Minolta 4.5x6 Folding Cameras

- Auto Minolta
- Auto Minolta I
- Auto Semi Minolta
- Auto Semi Minolta IIIA
- Auto Semi Minolta P
- Semi Minolta I
- Semi Minolta II

Minolta 6x6 Collapsible Camera

- Minolta Six

Minolta 6x6 TLR Twin Lens Reflex Cameras

- Minolta Autocord
- Minolta Autocord CDS I
- Minolta Autocord CDS II
- Minolta Autocord CDS III
- Minolta Autocord I
- Minolta Autocord II
- Minolta Autocord III
- Minolta Autocord L
- Minolta Autocord MXS
- Minolta Autocord MXV
- Minolta Autocord RA
- Minolta Autocord RB
- Minolta Autocord RG
- Minolta Autocord RI
- Minolta Miniflex
- Minoltacord
- Minoltaflex
- Minoltaflex Automat
- Minoltaflex I
- Minoltaflex II
- Minoltaflex IIB
- Minoltaflex III

Minolta 127 Film Cameras

Minolta 4x6.5 folding

- Nifcalette

Minolta 4x6.5 Collapsible Cameras

- Minolta Vest (sometimes called Minolta Best or Minolta Marble)
- Baby Minolta

Minolta 4x4 TLR Twin Lens Reflex Camera

- Minolta Miniflex

Minolta Plate Film Cameras

Minolta 6.5x9 Folding Bed Cameras

- Nifca Klapp
- Nifca Sport
- Arcadia
- Happy Hand
- Happy Hand -- type S
- Sirius

Minolta 6.5x9 Strut Folding Cameras

- Nifca Dox
- Minolta
- Auto Press Minolta

Minolta 16mm Film Cameras

Minolta 16mm Film SLR Cameras

- Minolta Auto-Zoom-X

Minolta 16mm Film Subminiature Cameras

- Minolta 16
- Minolta 16 Automat
- Minolta 16 Cds
- Minolta 16 EE
- Minolta 16 EE2
- Minolta 16 II
- Minolta 16 MG
- Minolta 16 MGS
- Minolta 16 P
- Minolta 16 Ps
- Minolta 16 QT
- Minolta Sonocon 16 MB-ZA

Minolta Disc Film Cameras

- Minolta ac 101 Courreges
- Minolta ac 301 Courreges
- Minolta Disc-5
- Minolta Disc-7
- Minolta Disc-S
- Minolta Disc-K

Minolta 110 Film Cameras

Minolta 110 Film SLR Cameras

- Minolta 110 Zoom SLR
- Minolta 110 Zoom SLR Mark II

Minolta 110 Film Pocket/Compact Cameras

- Pocket Autopak 200
- Pocket Autopak 250
- Pocket Autopak 270
- Pocket Autopak 430-E
- Pocket Autopak 430-EX
- Pocket Autopak 440-EX
- Pocket Autopak 450-E
- Pocket Autopak 450-EX
- Pocket Autopak 460-T
- Pocket Autopak 460-TX

- Pocket Autopak 50
- Pocket Autopak 70
- Pocket Pak 40
- Pocket Pak 440-E
- Pocket Pak 60
- Weathermatic A underwater camera

Minolta 126 Film Cameras

- Minolta Autopak 400-X
- Minolta Autopak 500 / Ilford Monarch / Revuematic 500
- Minolta Autopak 550
- Minolta Autopak 600-X
- Minolta Autopak 700
- Minolta Autopak 800
- Revere 3M Automatic 1034

Minolta Instant Film Cameras

- Minolta Instant Pro

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Minolta Links

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